

HOUSE RESOLUTION 193

By Staples

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Reverend Wilbur Foster Hawkins of Knoxville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Reverend Wilbur Foster Hawkins; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Hawkins was a spiritual leader, teacher, and mentor who was loved by many and who served as an inspiration to all who knew him; and

WHEREAS, a native of Wilkes County, North Carolina, Wilbur Hawkins was born on September 5, 1923, to Wilbert F. and Rosa Kirkland Hawkins; the oldest of the Hawkins children, he had one sister, Rosalyn, and one brother, Fred, and upon the untimely deaths of their parents, the three children were adopted and raised by their aunt, Jessie O'Kelly Coleman; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from high school, Wilbur Hawkins attended North Carolina A&T College; he was then drafted into the United States military, where he served in the Marine Corps for three and one-half years; and

WHEREAS, he received basic training at Camp Montford Point, a segregated training camp for the Marine Corps' first African-American recruits; during World War II, he served in the South Pacific, later receiving a Congressional Gold Medal recognition for his service; and

WHEREAS, upon discharge in 1945, Mr. Hawkins enrolled at Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia, where he met the love of his life, Almeda Stafford, whom he married on July 15, 1948; the couple had four children: Aleda, Wilbur, Jr., Isaac, and Debra; and

WHEREAS, Wilbur Hawkins attended Baptist Seminary and Cleveland Bible College and later completed his bachelor's degree at the American Baptist Theological Seminary in

Nashville; he was ordained as a Baptist minister on August 4, 1957, by Reverend E.R. Brewer at Christ Temple Missionary Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio; and

WHEREAS, it was in the late 1950s that Reverend Hawkins returned to Tennessee, this time settling his family in Knoxville, where he became active in the ministry under the tutelage of his father-in-law, Reverend Isaac J. Stafford, and Reverend H.J. Bailey, Reverend C.S. Moore, and Dr. W.T. Crutcher; on September 30, 1960, Reverend Hawkins was called to pastor Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, where he served the Lyons View community for forty years; and

WHEREAS, a respected and trusted leader among his peers, Reverend Wilbur Hawkins was the former moderator of the Knoxville District Baptist Association and served on several ordination councils for ministers and deacons. Upon his retirement from pastoral duties, he remained active in the ministry as an instructor throughout Knoxville and East Tennessee; his classes were always well attended, and many former students would continually share with him the joy of having him as a teacher; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Hawkins also taught construction trades and carpentry at the Knoxville Occupational Center and Austin East High School; over the years, he mentored others who would enter the construction industry, and he proudly built two of the family homes from the ground up; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Wilbur Hawkins was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his parents and his sister, Rosalyn Hawkins King, Wilbur Hawkins was preceded in death by his son Isaac, his grandson Douglas "Clayton" Hall, and his beloved wife Almeda, with whom he shared sixty-four years of life and love; and

WHEREAS, his memory will be cherished by his brother, Fred D. Hawkins; daughters, Aleda Douglass and Debra Hawkins; son Wilbur Hawkins, Jr.; special nephew and nieces, Harry King, Carolyn Strange, Stacia Hanford, Sheryl Hawkins, Beryl Hawkins, Joycelyn King, and Harriet Smith; grandchildren, Chris Douglass, Evan Mauldin, Amber Jones, Gary Powell, Michael Douglass, Michelle Butler, Syreeta Hawkins, Fallon Carter, Monique Hawkins,

Alexandria Hawkins, Stevland Hall, and Lunden Head; twenty-three great-grandchildren; and one great-great-granddaughter; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Hawkins leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor the memory of Reverend Wilbur Foster Hawkins, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Reverend Hawkins.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.